

# EAGLE'S PROPWASH

APRIL 2017 ISSUE

CHAPTER 113 *"The Backyard Eagles"*



Our Web Site:

[www.113.eaachapter.org](http://www.113.eaachapter.org)

[EAA113@yahoogroups.com](mailto:EAA113@yahoogroups.com)

**Meetings: 7:30 PM**

the 3rd Thursday of each  
month at the

**EAA 113 AVIATION  
EDUCATION CENTER**

**Mettetal Airport (1D2)**

**8550 Lilley Road, Canton, MI**

**(734) 392-8113**



Bob Trumpolt's informative and entertaining presentation at the March meeting about his love affair with "Connie."

*Photo Courtesy of Shunsuke Shibata*

## Member Services

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<b>President:</b> Joe Kirik	(248) 872-3220	president@eaa113.org
<b>Vice President:</b> Sanjay Dhall	(734) 658-7444	vicepresident@eaa113.org
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<b>Newsletter:</b> Elizabeth Hebron	(734) 776-9294	newsletter@eaa113.org

### Class III Board Member:

John Maxfield	(248) 890-6767
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Al Bosonetto, Dave Buck, John Maxfield

<b>Dues:</b> Dave Buck	(734) 453-5375
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### **Technical Counselors:**

Randy Hebron	(734) 326-7659
Dan Jones	(248) 310-6018
Dan Valle	(313) 539-9818

### **Flight Advisors:**

John Maxfield	(248) 890-6767
Dan Valle	(313) 539-9818

### **Scholarships:**

Elizabeth Hebron	(734) 776-9294
Debbie Redding	(734) 397-3452
John Maxfield	(248) 890-6767

### **Young Eagles/Eagle Flights:**

Debbie Redding	(734) 397-3452	events@eaa113.org
Dave James	(734) 721-4213	

<b>Web:</b> John Maxfield	(248) 890-6767	webmaster@eaa113.org
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### **Aviation Center Management Committee:**

Al Bosonetto	(734) 261-5518
Dave Buck	(734) 453-5375
Bill Brown	(734) 420-2733
Bruce Breisch	(734) 422-2692



### **CHAPTER MISSION STATEMENT:**

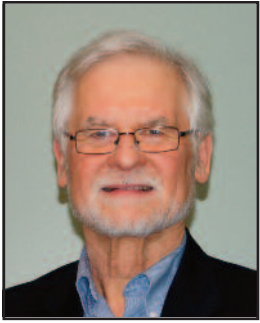
*"EAA Chapter 113's major focus is on the relationships with people who have diverse aviation interests, centered around their love of flight, fellowship, learning, and fun."*

*Chapter members have a passion for flying and are willing to share it with others.*

*Chapter 113 provides the opportunity for exchange of information, as well as the interaction that leads to friendships that last a lifetime."*

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

*"The Board of Directors are to provide both advice and assistance to the chapter officers on an ongoing basis."*



## PRESIDENT'S *PODIUM*

**Joe Kirik** (248) 872-3220  
president@eaa113.org  
April 2017

March may not have been a great flying month, but we more than made up for it with some unforgettable events. The Chapter Awards Banquet truly was “Out of This World” thanks to the creative efforts of Debbie Redding, John Maxfield and their team of volunteers. Space Shuttle astronaut and EAA Vice Chairman Charlie Precourt’s presentation (detailed later in this newsletter) was fascinating. And you had to love the huge rocket parked in the front right corner of the hangar – John certainly earned the “Homebuilt Rocket” award that Charlie presented to him. See Shunsuke Shibata’s photos inside.

Our March Chapter Meeting presentation by Bob Trumpolt was an eye-opening look back to the end of the age of the great piston-powered airliners. You had to love Bob’s recounting of the development of the Lockheed Constellation and his time as one of the last “Connie” Flight Engineers. Everybody in our Chapter has his/her own aviation history, so why not share it? If you’d like to but don’t know where to start, let us know and we can work with you to make it happen. I had a great time working with Bob to gather photos and video to help illustrate his story. It doesn’t have to be a 45-minute presentation recounting your entire aviation history. Maybe you have a particular milestone or memorable event that we’d find interesting. Shorter presentations are fine, we could combine two or three of them into one meeting. Think about it!

We have some interesting presentations lined up for the next few Chapter meetings. This month we’ll find out from Paul Draper what it’s like to get checked out in a Roush P-51. In May, a special guest speaker, former air traffic controller, weather specialist and aviation author Rose Marie Kern, will present “Safe Summer Flying” tips. And in June we’re expecting an update from Todd Trainor and Patrick Mihalek on the progress of the B-25 Sandbar Mitchell project by The Warbirds of Glory Museum in Brighton.

The Museum is offering free SolidWorks CAD Essentials training to students ages 14 to 23. A CAD expert from the aerospace industry will teach the basics of 3D CAD design using SolidWorks. By the end of the course, students will be able to examine a simple B-25 factory drawing from the 1940s and design the same part in CAD. The classes will be held on four successive Saturdays from April 22 to May 13, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Brighton. More info and applications at [www.warbirdsofglory.org](http://www.warbirdsofglory.org).

Youth outreach is key to preserving and growing general aviation. EAA’s Young Eagles program is a cornerstone of that effort and is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Chapter 113 continues to do its part with YE events coming up April 22, April 29 and May 13. As always, we will need volunteer pilots and ground crew. See Debbie’s article later in this newsletter.

*continued...*

Randy Hebron is also looking for volunteers to help with the Selfridge Adopt-a-Plane program on May 13th involving the annual washing of the SNB-5 that Chapter 113 has been sponsoring for several years. This outing includes lunch and a free tour of the Selfridge Air Museum. Please contact Randy at 734-560-2115 or rchebron@gmail.com if you are interested in participating. Security clearance paperwork must be submitted ASAP after the April Chapter 113 meeting.

Our Chapter has been approached by the local Boy Scouts Council to co-sponsor an Aviation Explorers Post. This would involve providing a monthly hands-on demonstration/presentation during the school year to a small group of teens age 14 to 19. We'd need several volunteers to pull this off. We have two members who have stepped up so far, but we need a few more. If interested please contact me or Al Bosonetto if you'd like to help. In a similar vein, we've been asked to come up with science projects to help kids learn about aviation. Items small enough to put into an education trailer that can be moved from airport to airport are being sought. This could be a PC flight simulator, a small wind tunnel or something to demonstrate flight controls. Let Dave Buck know if you have an idea or item to contribute.

This month's EAA Chapter video will announce an opportunity for chapters to nominate a Young Eagle for a scholarship to EAA's Sport Pilot Academy – FREE flight training resulting in a Sport Pilot rating. Let's think about who we can nominate! Candidates must be at least 18 years old.

Fly safe!

Joe Kirik

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Bill Brown, Jr.** holds Private, SEL, MEL, and Instruments ratings. He flies a PA30 Twin Comanche. He loves aviation -- full size and RC model flying, as well as golf, fishing, and building things. He enjoys traveling anywhere in his Comanche. Bill and his wife, Donna, have two adult sons. Welcome, Bill!

**Ryan Snyder** is a Commercial Single Engine pilot who joins us from Ypsilanti, MI. Welcome to Chapter 113, Ryan!





# PAULSON AVIATION & HISTORY LIBRARY

Barb Cook (734) 277-3469

library@eaa113.org

April 2017

***Defining the Wind; The Beaufort Scale and How a Nineteenth Century Admiral Turned Science into Poetry,***  
by Scott Huler. Crown Publishers, New York, 2004. Gift of chapter member Robert Trumpolt.  
Library shelf 551.518 HUL

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 0 calm            |                 |
| 1 light air       | 7 moderate gale |
| 2 light breeze    | 8 fresh gale    |
| 3 gentle breeze   | 9 strong gale   |
| 4 moderate breeze | 10 whole gale   |
| 5 fresh breeze    | 11 storm        |
| 6 strong breeze   | 12 hurricane    |

Now why would I be interested in the wind, you ask.

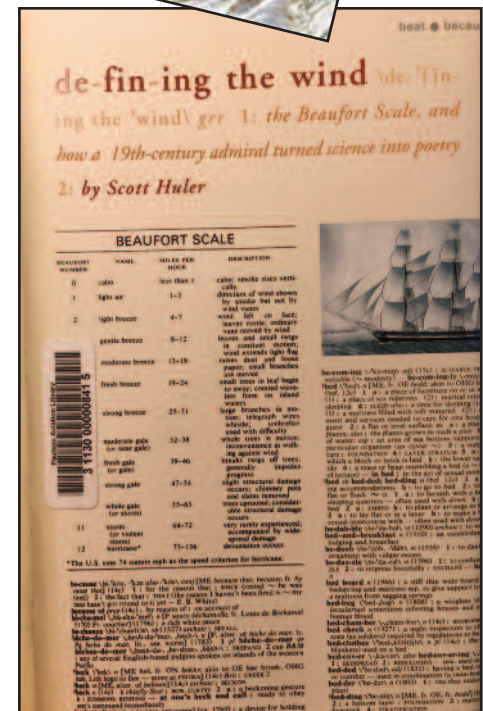
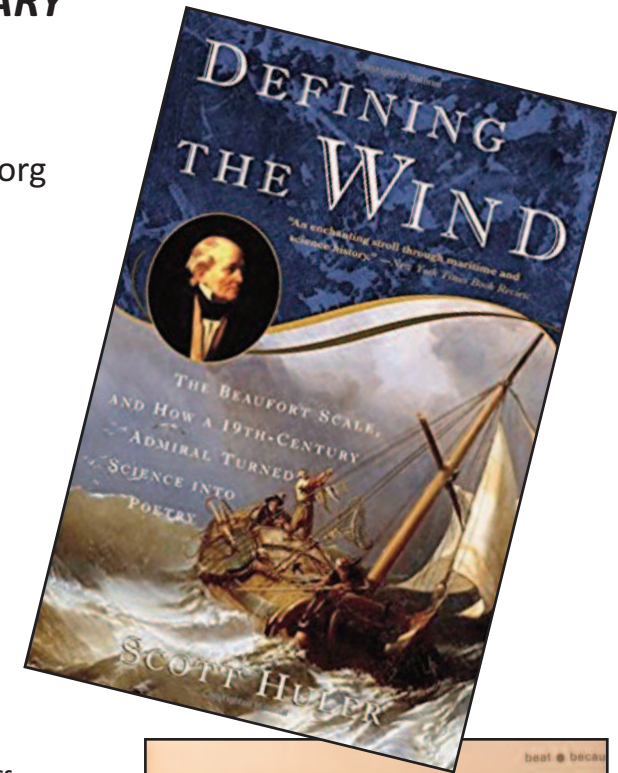
1. Because my flight instructor told me, "You always, always, always know where the wind is coming from."
2. I am very fond of the rousing British brass band tune "Gaelforce" by Scots composer Peter Graham. OK, different spelling, different meaning, but it may still be a play on words and I didn't always know that! (You can listen to it performed by the Black Dyke brass band on YouTube.)
3. I learned about Mr. Beaufort's wind scale while vacationing on Galveston Island, TX and learning the history of weather prediction during their devastating hurricane of 1900.
4. My love of Captain Aubrey novels by Patrick O'Brian predisposes me to add to my knowledge of sea-faring.

Hence, I was ready for a book about Mr. Beaufort (1774-1857) and his wind scale. And what a book it is. I totally agree with the cover notes, it "is a wonderfully readable, often humorous, and always rich story."

"At [the book's] heart is a fascination with the language we use to describe the world around us. Less a piece of science writing than a writer's meditation on science, this book is equal parts history, mystery, textbook, and memoir, as much a story of how we think about the wind as it is about the wind itself, and deserves a wide audience among readers interested in writing, nature, and history."\*

The cover is the entire page of a dictionary showing the Beaufort scale and a three-masted sailing ship, of course. There are several appendices, notes on sources and accuracy, and a few black/white charts and photos of original journals.

\* Publishers Weekly, starred review



# CHAPTER 113's ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET, MARCH 26, 2017

*All Photos Courtesy of Shunsuke Shibata*



Special Events Coordinator, Debbie Redding, came up with another "out of this world" banquet theme! Congratulations on a job well-done, Debbie!













*Thank you, Charlie!!*

*A special Thank You to Charlie Precourt for making this year's Banquet such a memorable evening! We offer our gratitude for making the trip from Utah to Michigan for our event and for staying late into the night meeting with attendees. Clearly, members and guests enjoyed his presentation as it was heard throughout the night and days following, just how humble and "down to earth" he is.*

*Charlie began his presentation with a photo montage of the many aircraft he has had the honor of flying from his first plane through his service in the Air Force. He explained the path he took to becoming an astronaut as merely "luck" and being in the right place at the right time. As a four time Space Shuttle astronaut, Charlie taught us the world is indeed a small place. Having been on the first and last shuttle missions to the Mir Space Station, he discussed the diversity in the space program, including a story about one of his now best friends, one of the Mir Russian cosmonauts. In the Air Force, Charlie flew F-15's over the East/West German border intercepting Russian Migs. Coincidentally, come to later find out, this Russian friend flew Migs over the same border at the same time!*

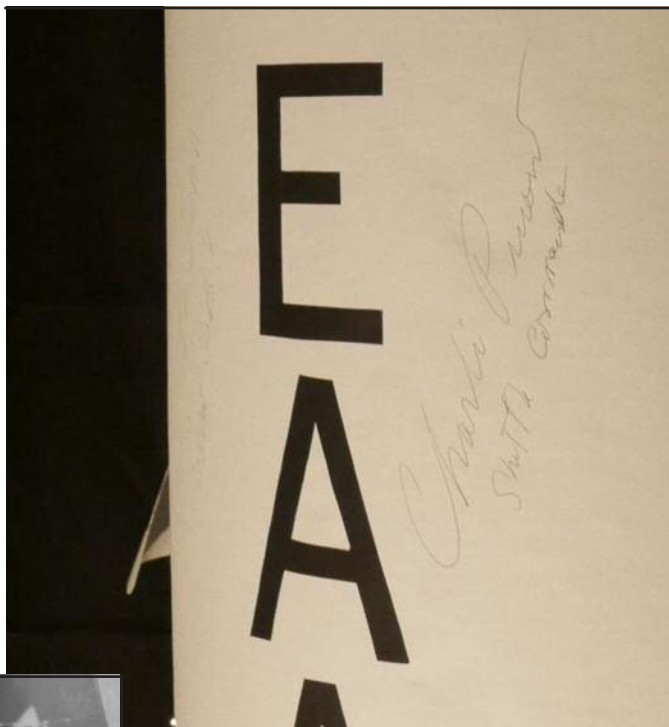
*Most notably, Charlie gave advice to the new generation of aviators. He told them it is not necessarily the place you end up but the journey and the opportunities that are presented along the way. In typical EAA fashion, he stressed it is the people that make aviation special and to share flying with others, especially with youth by reminding us to participate in the Young Eagles program. Also, as Vice-Chairman on the Board of Directors, Charlie offered vision for EAA. We are lucky to have a man with such expertise representing EAA!*

*One young CFI, even took notes through the evening and shares his favorite Charlie Precourt quote:*

*"Keep your eyes open! Enjoy where you're at!"*



*Black & White Photo  
Courtesy of Nick Forsman*



*Charlie & Nick Wolf  
Photo Courtesy of Dirk Wolf*



*Photos Courtesy of Shunsuke Shibata*

## CHAPTER 113 & METTETAL AIRPORT'S CHILDREN'S AIRPLANE TRAIN PROJECT

Chapter 113 and Mettetal Airport children's airplane train project is in need of volunteers to construct the individual planes. If you can layout, cut, turn a screw driver, drill holes in wood, paint, have other construction skills, or just fill coffee cups – please contact Jim Morency at 248-981-8127 or by email: [morency517@yahoo.com](mailto:morency517@yahoo.com). We are in need of 46 oz empty juice cans or 1 pound metal coffee cans (for the engine cylinders). Please save and give to Jim.

The project finish date is to have the “train” ready to go in time for the annual Father's Day Pancake Breakfast, June 18, 2017.



Prototype built by  
Randy Hebron.  
*Photo Courtesy of  
Randy Hebron*



Richard Hensley graciously demonstrates  
the roominess of the cockpit for kids  
of all shapes and sizes.  
*Photo Courtesy of Dave James*



The goal is to have  
multiple airplanes,  
towed by a lawn  
tractor.



## SELFRIDGE SNB-5 AIRPLANE WASH

Volunteers are desperately needed to fulfil Chapter 113's annual commitment to wash the SNB-5 at the Selfridge Air Museum. This event will be on the originally scheduled date of Saturday, May 13, 2017. Plan to arrive at Selfridge at 11:00 AM. We need to submit the security clearance paperwork ASAP after the April Chapter 113 meeting.

Please contact Randy Hebron for more information: [rchebron@gmail.com](mailto:rchebron@gmail.com) or 734-776-9294.

This is a rare opportunity to get up close and personal with this iconic aircraft! Imagine wetting her down, and lathering up her sleek fuselage.... Now, reach way up and pull your minds out of the gutter -- we're talking about washing an airplane!



## Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Young Eagles!



*Last month's issue of Propwash included an article on various opportunities to get involved with EAA 113. Here, we will further expound upon one of the most meaningful programs within EAA....the Young Eagles Program. Please join us in celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!*

Twenty five years ago, EAA developed the Young Eagle program to introduce young people, between the ages of 8-17, into the world of aviation. The goal is to offer opportunities to see the world through new perspectives and understand that an individual's potential is unlimited. As the future demand for pilots is certain to exceed the supply, it is more important than ever to demonstrate new possibilities and broaden the horizon for today's youth.

In an effort to expand the flight experience, EAA devised the "Flight plan" to encourage youth to pursue aviation.

**Step One** begins with a 20 minute Young Eagle flight. The pilot discusses the aircraft and experience with one or two youth at a time. Upon completion of the flight, the pilot will give each participant a Young Eagle certificate and Logbook.

**Step Two** is a free EAA Student Membership supported by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. This is done by simply entering the code on the back of their "Logbook". This membership includes: Free admission to 300+ science and technology museums; Free Academy of Model Aeronautics Student Membership; Free electronic copy of EAA Sport Aviation magazine; and access to various aviation education resources.

**Step Three** is the Sporty's Learn to Fly Course (\$199 value). It is a complete interactive online ground school course that can be completed on a personalized schedule. EAA will also reimburse the Young Eagle when they pass their FAA written exam (\$165 value).

Once the Young Eagle completes the first three volumes of the Sporty's Learn to Fly Course, they will qualify for **Step Four** which is an actual first flight lesson at a flight school of their choice, (\$130 value).

**Step Five** includes the access that EAA provides Young Eagles for resources for flight training and college scholarships.

As you can see, EAA and other contributing sponsors are potentially investing well over \$500 for each Young Eagle to pursue their interest in aviation. Over 40,000 young people so far have taken advantage of the online course, thus, taken that next step in following a dream of learning to fly.



EAA 113 participates regularly in the Young Eagle program. However, to continue to offer these opportunities to young people, we need more volunteers. Of course, there is a need for more **Pilots** who are willing to provide flights in their aircraft, but also there are many other positions needed to make Young Eagle events happen.

**Registration:** Help parents complete the registration forms before their flight and assign the Young Eagle to fly with an available pilot. Also, they will complete the Young Eagle certificates for presentation following the flights. These volunteers answer questions for the both the children and parents.

**Ground Support Team:** to assist with directing traffic-airplane, cars and pedestrians. Some will act as Escorts to safely get the children safely to and from the aircraft and assist the pilot with getting the young person buckled in and headsets on. They are also responsible for helping to ensure documentation is accurate for each flight.

**Public Relations:** We need volunteers to act as EAA 113 Ambassadors to promote our Chapter and offer guidance and direction to the young people and their parents.

**“Mini Class” Instructors:** On some of our events when we host school groups, we hold a few “mini classes” on aerodynamics, helicopter aerodynamics, preflight and careers prior to the flight. We need volunteers to assist with teaching these 20 minute sessions generally to middle school groups.

Please find the time to volunteer at any or all of the following events. We need you!

**Upcoming Events at EAA 113:**

April 22<sup>nd</sup>-Detroit Area Jack and Jill Club

April 29<sup>th</sup>-Garden City JrROTC

May 13<sup>th</sup>-Northville Christian Academy 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class

*Potentially June 24<sup>th</sup>-Young Eagle 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event Rally*

*We are hoping to have our own Young Eagle 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event on June 24<sup>th</sup>. We would like to promote this event at the Father's Day Pancake Breakfast. To pull this off, we will need MANY volunteers with the ability to give an early commitment so we know if this is even feasible for our Chapter.*

The most successful youth aviation program in history will continue well into the future. We, at EAA 113 want to play our part and continue to offer our time and efforts to this cause. Please thoughtfully consider volunteering for the Young Eagle program. You can make a difference in the future of aviation by being a positive influence on a young person. The smiles of the participants are the best rewards!!

Contact Debbie to Volunteer!!! [events@eaa113.org](mailto:events@eaa113.org) or 734-397-3452



This is why we do Young Eagles!!



# HEBRON FAMILY TRIP TO CHARLESTON, SC & PATRIOT'S POINT

To celebrate our middle daughter Sarah's milestone birthday, we all took a trip to Charleston, SC. Patriot's Point is where the USS Yorktown, the USS Laffey, and the submarine Clamagore reside. (We also took a horse-drawn carriage tour and oogled some of the stately antebellum mansions.)



The USS YORKTOWN (CV-10) was the tenth aircraft carrier to serve in the United States Navy. Under construction as BON HOMME RICHARD, this new Essex-class carrier was renamed in honor of YORKTOWN (CV-5) sunk at the epic Battle of Midway (June 1942). Built in an amazing 16 ½ months at Newport News, Virginia, YORKTOWN was commissioned on April 15, 1943. World War II's famous "Fighting Lady" would participate significantly in the Pacific offensive that began in late 1943 and ended with the defeat of Japan in 1945. YORKTOWN received the Presidential Unit Citation and earned 11 battle stars for service in World War II.

In the 1950s, YORKTOWN was modernized to operate jet aircraft as an attack carrier (CVA). In 1957, she was re-designated an anti-submarine aircraft carrier (CVS), and would later earn 5 battle stars for service off Vietnam (1965-68). The ship also recovered the Apollo 8 astronauts and capsule (December 1968). YORKTOWN was decommissioned in 1970 and placed in reserve. In 1975, this historic ship was towed from Bayonne, NJ to Charleston to become the centerpiece of Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum.

## Craft Stats:

Displacement: 27,000+ tons (1943) 30,000+ tons (1956)

Length: 872 feet (1943) 888 feet (1956)

Speed: 30+ knots

Range: 14,000 nautical miles at 13 knots

Armament: (circa 1944) 12 X 5 in/38 cal guns (127 mm), 68 X 40mm 917 quad mounts, 61 X 20mm (single); (circa 1968): 4 X 5 in/38 cal (127mm)





*All Photos Courtesy of Randy Hebron*





Below decks







USS LAFFEY (DD-724) is the most decorated World War II era US Destroyer still in existence. DD-724 was named in honor of LAFFEY (DD-459), sunk during the Naval Battle for Guadalcanal (13 November 1942). Both ships were named in honor of Seaman Bartlett Laffey, a Civil War Medal of Honor recipient.

#### Craft Stats:

Displacement: 2,200 tons

Length: 376 ft 6 in (114.8 m)

Propulsion: 60,000 shp (45 MW); 2 propellers

Speed: 34 knots (63 km/h)

Armament: (circa 1944) 6 x 5 in./38 guns (12 cm), 12 x 40mm AA guns, 11 x 20mm AA guns, 10 x 21 in. torpedo tubes, 6 x depth charge projectors, 2 x depth charge tracks.



The only GUPPY III submarine preserved in the U.S., the USS CLAMARORE (SS-343) is Patriots Point iconic Cold War submarine.

#### Craft Stats:

Displacement: 1,975 tons

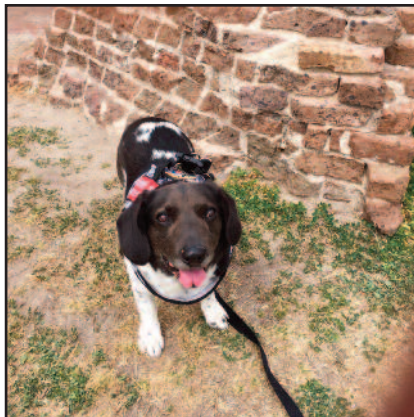
Length: 322 ft 5 in (98 m)

Speed: 17.2 knots (31.85 km/h) surface; 14.5 knots (26.85 km/h) submerged (30 minutes)

Range: 15,900 nm (29,400 km) at 8.5 knots (15.7 km/h) on surface

Armament: 10 x 21 in (533 mm) torpedo tubes, (6 forward, 4 aft), 24 torpedoes

(Above specifications circa 1962 GUPPY III.)



While the rest of our group was touring these historic ships, Pepper and I took the ferry to Fort Sumter and immersed ourselves in Civil War lore.

*Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth Hebron*



# A MYSTERY P-51 PILOT...

Submitted by Dave James

This 1967 true story is of an experience by a young 12 year old boy in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. It is about the vivid memory of a privately rebuilt P-51 from WWII and its famous owner/pilot.

In the morning sun, I could not believe my eyes. There, in our little airport, sat a majestic P-51. They said it had flown in during the night from some U.S. Airport, on its way to an air show. The pilot had been tired, so he just happened to choose Kingston for his stop over. It was to take to the air very soon. I marveled at the size of the plane, dwarfing the Pipers and Canucks tied down by her. It was much larger than in the movies. She glistened in the sun like a bulwark of security from days gone by.

The pilot arrived by cab, paid the driver, and then stepped into the pilot's lounge. He was an older man; his wavy hair was gray and tossed. It looked like it might have been combed, say, around the turn of the century. His flight jacket was checked, creased and worn - it smelled old and genuine. Old Glory was prominently sewn to its shoulders. He projected a quiet air of proficiency and pride devoid of arrogance. He filed a quick flight plan to Montreal ("Expo-67 Air Show") then walked across the tarmac.

After taking several minutes to perform his walk-around check, the tall, lanky man returned to the flight lounge to ask if anyone would be available to stand by with fire extinguishers while he "flashed the old bird up, just to be safe." Though only 12 at the time I was allowed to stand by with an extinguisher after brief instruction on its use -- "If you see a fire, point, then pull this lever!" he said. (I later became a firefighter, but that's another story.) The air around the exhaust manifolds shimmered like a mirror from fuel fumes as the huge prop started to rotate. One manifold, then another, and yet another barked -- I stepped back with the others. In moments the Packard -built Merlin engine came to life with a thunderous roar. Blue flames knifed from her manifolds with an arrogant snarl. I looked at the others' faces; there was no concern. I lowered the bell of my extinguisher. One of the guys signaled to walk back to the lounge. We did. Several minutes later we could hear the pilot doing his pre-flight run-up. He'd taxied to the end of runway 19, out of sight. All went quiet for several seconds. We ran to the second story deck to see if we could catch a glimpse of the P-51 as she started down the runway. We could not. There we stood, eyes fixed to a spot half way down 19. Then a roar ripped across the field, much louder than before. Like a furious hell spawn set loose -- something mighty this way was coming. "Listen to that thing!" said the controller.

In seconds the Mustang burst into our line of sight. Its tail was already off the runway and it was moving faster than anything I'd ever seen by that point on 19. Two-thirds the way down 19 the Mustang was airborne with her gear going up. The prop tips were supersonic. We clasped our ears as the Mustang climbed hellishly fast into the circuit to be eaten up by the dog-day haze. We stood for a few moments, in stunned silence, trying to digest what we'd just seen.

The radio controller rushed by me to the radio. "Kingston tower calling Mustang?" He looked back to us as he waited for an acknowledgment. The radio crackled, "Go ahead, Kingston." "Roger, Mustang. Kingston tower would like to advise the circuit is clear for a low level pass." I stood in shock because the controller had just, more or less, asked the pilot to return for an impromptu air show! The controller looked at us. "Well, What?" He asked. "I can't let that guy go without asking. I couldn't forgive myself!"

The radio crackled once again, "Kingston, do I have permission for a low level pass, east to west, across the field?" "Roger, Mustang, the circuit is clear for an east to west pass." "Roger, Kingston, I'm coming out of 3,000 feet, stand by." We rushed back onto the second-story deck, eyes fixed toward the eastern

straining against positive G's and gravity. Her wing tips spilling contrails of condensed air, prop-tips again supersonic. The burnished bird blasted across the eastern margin of the field shredding and tearing the air. At about 500 mph and 150 yards from where we stood she passed with the old American pilot saluting. Imagine. A salute! I felt like laughing; I felt like crying; she glistened; she screamed; the building shook; my heart pounded. Then the old pilot pulled her up and rolled, and rolled, and rolled out of sight into the broken clouds and indelible into my memory.

I've never wanted to be an American more than on that day! It was a time when many nations in the world looked to America as their big brother. A steady and even-handed beacon of security who navigated difficult political water with grace and style; not unlike the old American pilot who'd just flown into my memory. He was proud, not arrogant, humble, not a braggart, old and honest, projecting an aura of America at its best.

That America will return one day! I know it will! Until that time, I'll just send off this story. Call it a loving reciprocal salute to a Country, and especially to that old American pilot: the late-JIMMY STEWART (1908-1997), actor, real WWII Hero (Commander of a US Army Air Force Bomber Wing stationed in England), and a USAF Reserves Brigadier General, who wove a wonderfully fantastic memory for a young Canadian boy that's lasted a lifetime.

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## BY SARAH OLIVER FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2017

Submitted by Dave James

'This is wizard!' 100-year-old woman who flew spitfires during the Second World War celebrates her centenary by getting behind the controls again.



*Mary Ellis (pictured during her time as an Air Transport Auxiliary pilot in WW2) has celebrated her 100th birthday.*

Tearing through the skies above the South Coast, two Spitfires evoke powerful memories of Britain's wartime resilience.

But this stirring image holds a further poignancy – for in the cockpit of the lead aircraft sits Mary Ellis, celebrating her 100th birthday by recreating her time as one of the 'Ata-girls', the select gang of female pilots who flew Britain's fighters during the war.





*Mary Ellis (circled) was handed the controls of the 275 mph twin-seater as it swooped over West Sussex.*



*Mrs Ellis looked back over her left shoulder and glanced at the aircraft she once flew.*

And over her shoulder is one of the actual Spitfires she flew during her 1,000 flights as a First Officer with the Air Transport Auxiliary. 'Wizard, this is wizard!' yelled the delighted centenarian through her intercom.

Mary was handed the controls of the 275 mph twinseater as it swooped over West Sussex. After about 15 minutes, she turned for home, and told her co-pilot Matt Jones: 'Goodwood on the nose, you have control...'. Then she settled back to enjoy the ride back to base.

Earlier, Mary watched in delight as Spitfire MV154 took its place beside her in an extraordinary airborne tribute. It was a plane she had delivered to RAF Brize Norton from Southampton on September 15, 1944, and it hides a sentimental secret. For at the end of the 25-minute wartime flight, she signed the cockpit, scrawling her maiden name Wilkins and the initials ATA.

She hoped her tag might be spotted by a handsome pilot and lead to a wartime romance – although the impulsive act, a career one-off, didn't bag her a boyfriend.

Mary, originally from Oxfordshire, had her first flying lesson in 1938, and flew for pleasure until 1941 when she heard a BBC radio appeal for women pilots to join the auxiliary service and so release male pilots for combat duty.

Speaking at a surprise birthday party on Thursday, Mary said: 'The war was a challenge and one had to do something about it. I went on and on until I flew everything. I love the Spitfire – it's my favourite aircraft, it's everyone's favourite, it's the symbol of freedom.'

For four years she ferried warplanes from factories to frontline squadrons. The 166 women of the ATA – about one in eight of the total – have been dubbed 'The Female Few', echoing Winston Churchill's description of the RAF airmen who fought in the Battle of Britain.

Mary was usually found at the joystick of a Spitfire or a Hurricane but ultimately flew more than 50 types of aircraft, logging 1,100 hours of flight, much to the astonishment of some colleagues.

As she sat on the airfield ready to deliver her first Spitfire, the mechanic standing on the wing asked how many of them she'd flown. When she said it was her first, he was so startled he fell right off. The largest aircraft she flew solo was the Wellington bomber. After landing at an East Anglian airfield, Mary was greeted by the ground crew who asked where the pilot was. 'I'm the pilot,' she said. They insisted on searching the aircraft before they believed her.



*The largest aircraft she flew solo was the Wellington bomber.*

It was dangerous work. Mary was sometimes ordered to move combat-damaged planes that were not officially fit to fly, but had to be taken for repairs. She crash-landed twice and was shot at once. Fourteen of her fellow ATA female flyers lost their lives, including aviation pioneer Amy Johnson.

Mary – who to this day needs no spectacles, nor a walking stick – was one of the last six women serving in the ATA when it disbanded after the war. She remained a private pilot and then became managing director of Sandown Airport on the Isle of Wight. She married Don Ellis, a fellow pilot, in 1961, but was widowed in 2009. Matt Jones, who flies Spitfires for Goodwood-based Boulton Flight Academy, reunited Mary with MV154 after first meeting her in 2015. He conspired with the plane's current owner, pilot Maxi Gainza, to bring it to the UK from its base in Bremgarten, Germany.

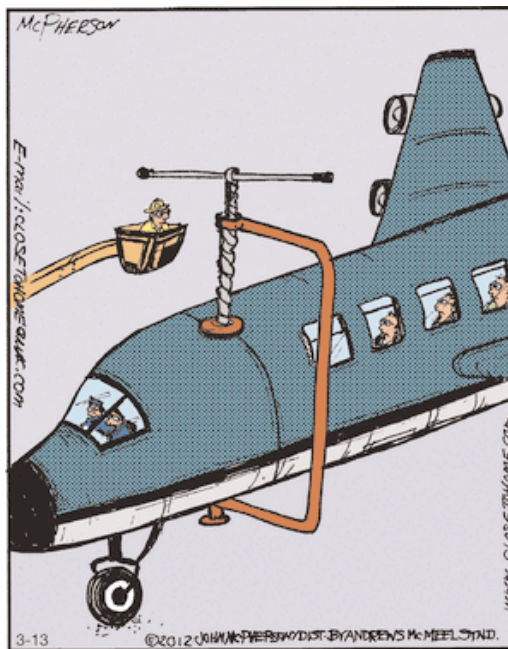
He said: 'I gave Mary control of our Spitfire. I wasn't sure where we were but Mary was very clear. She pointed us towards Thorney Island, up through the Witterings, flew on to Selsey Bill and then Bognor Regis, never losing a foot of altitude.

'She showed me precisely how she was able to deliver all those aircraft with just a map, a compass and a stopwatch. I was utterly humbled by a superior aviator who also happens to be 60 years my senior!'



*Mrs Ellis toasted a glass of champagne with co-pilot Matt Jones, managing director of Boulton Flight Academy.*





"Folks, our mechanics are waiting for one little repair to firm up a bit and then we'll be on our way."

## *Calling all video enthusiasts!*

*Submit your video of the month to Sanjay Dhall  
at [vicepresident@eaa113.org](mailto:vicepresident@eaa113.org)*

(Or you might be watching someone's 60-year-old 8 mm home movies next month....)













EAA Chapter 113 member Mark French, FAA parachute rigger, offers his services to all members of the chapter at a special rate; **\*FREE\*** for any of their parachute needs. If anyone is in need of a pilot rig for testing or acrobatics, a number of pilot emergency parachutes are available for loan. Any questions related to parachutes and parachuting can be answered by contacting him at: [mark.r.french1@gmail.com](mailto:mark.r.french1@gmail.com) or by calling 734.260.7342.





# April 2017











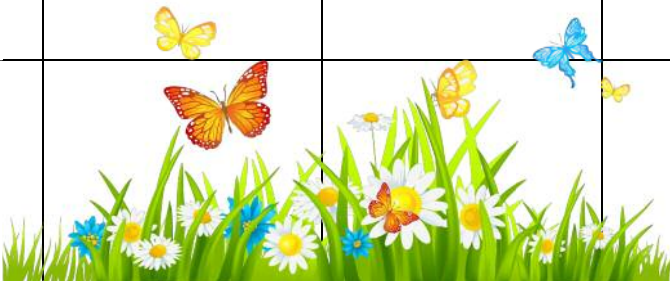
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 <i>Breakfast @ 3 Brothers</i> 8:15am
2	3	4	5	6 <b>EAA 113</b> <b>Homebuilder's</b> <b>Meeting 7:30 pm</b>	7	8 <i>Breakfast @ 3 Brothers</i> 8:15am
9 <i>Palm Sunday</i> 	10	11	12	13 <b>EAA 113 Board</b> <b>Meeting 7:30 pm</b>	14 <i>Good Friday</i> 	15 <i>Breakfast @ 3 Brothers</i> 8:15am
16 	17	18	19	20 <b>EAA 113 General</b> <b>Meeting 7:30 pm</b>	21  <i>Earth Day is tomorrow</i>	22 <i>Breakfast @ 3 Brothers</i> 8:15am <u>Young Eagles</u> 8:30 a.m. 
23	24	25	26	27 <b>EAA 113 Safety</b> <b>Meeting 7:30 pm</b>	28	29 <i>Breakfast @ 3 Brothers</i> 8:15am <u>Young Eagles</u> 8:30 a.m. 
30						

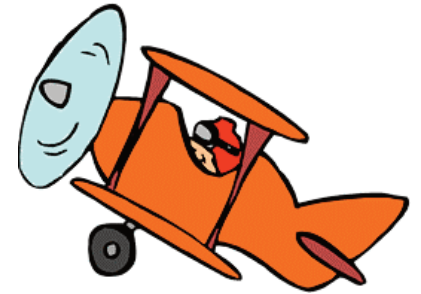




# May 2017



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 <b>EAA 113 Homebuilder's Meeting 7:30 pm</b>	5	6 <b>Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:15am</b>
7	8	9	10	11 <b>EAA 113 Board Meeting 7:30 pm</b>	12 	13 <b>Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:15am</b> Selfridge Plane Wash Young Eagles 8:30 a.m. 
14  3NP Pancake Breakfast 1-11	15	16 	17	18 <b>EAA 113 General Meeting 7:30 pm</b>	19	20 <b>Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:15am</b>  Linden Airport (9G2) 7am-12
21	22	23	24	25 <b>EAA 113 Safety Meeting 7:30 pm</b>	26	27 <b>Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:15am</b>
28  Jackson Airport (JXN) 7am-12	29 	30	31			



**Next Meeting:**  
**Thursday, April 20, 2017**  
**7:30 PM at the**  
**EAA Aviation Education Center**

**EAA Chapter 113**  
8512 N. Lilley Rd  
Canton, MI 48187  
(734) 392-8113

